DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 321 183 CG 022 624

TITLE	About the Middle School Years. Educational Opportunities in Virginia, Book 3.
INSTITUTION	Virginia State Dept. of Education, Richmond.
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	127p.; For Book 1 see ED 290 559. For related documents, see CG 022 623-629. For teacher's activity guide, see CG 022 625.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescent Development; Adolescents; Educational Planning; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; *Middle Schools; Parent Child Relationship; Parent Responsibility; Parent School Relationship; Program Descriptions; *School Orientation; School Role; *Student Adjustment; *Student School Relationship
IDENTIFIERS	*Virginia

ABSTRACT

This booklet is written for middle school students and their parents. It provides information about middle schools in Virginia, and includes suggestions about how parents may help their children during the middle school years. Chapter 1, "Starting Middle Schools," begins with a section on getting acquainted with middle school, discussing student responsibilities, homeroom classes, studying and homework, extracurricular activities, and other facts. It also discusses what middle school students are like--their physical, social, and emotional changes; need for independence; and adjustment. Finally, it lists and describes the subjects in the middle school curriculum. Chapter 2 describes special programs and activities in middle school: guidance and counseling, talented and gifted programs, summer school, career education, the testing program, handicapped student programs, school social work/visiting teacher program, school psychology program, homebound and hospital programs, library media programs, the school nurse program, and extracurricular activities. Chapter 3, directed to students, discusses learning more about oneself and careers, and chapter 4, directed to parents, discusses how parents may help their middle school children. Information is provided on early adolescence, parent-child relationships, communicating with children, using logical and natural consequences, encouraging independence, helping children to develop responsibility and to succeed, coping with mistakes and failures, holding family meetings, recognizing children's efforts and accomplishments, and getting help when problems arise. Other Virginia publications in this series are listed. (TE)

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ABOUT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN VIRGINIA, BOOK 3

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

WHY THIS BOOKLET?

Soon you will start the grades between elementary school and high school—grades 6, 7, and 8. Whether you go to a middle, intermediate, or junior high school, these school years will be very important to you. In these grades you will take courses and participate in activities which will prepare you for high school. At the same time you will begin to think more seriously about high school and your education and career after high school. This booklet has been written to help you and your parents plan for your middle school years.

WHAT IS IN THIS BOOKLET?

This booklet tells about the middle school years, grades 6 through 8. It has information about topics such as:

- What middle school is like
- Responsibilities of middle school students
- Studying and homework
- What to do when you need help with problems or concerns
- What middle school students are like
- Middle school subjects and courses
- Special activities and programs
- How to learn more about yourself and careers

In the last part of the booklet there is a chapter for parents. It contains information and suggestions about how parents may help their children during the middle school years.

HOW SHOULD STUDENTS USE THIS BOOKLET?

Begin now to use this booklet to plan for middle school. Read it carefully and complete the activities in it. Ask your parents, counselors, and teachers for help with anything you do not understand. In your reading you will see that the term *middle school* has been used to describe grades 6 through 8.

It is important that your parents know what is in this booklet. Ask them to read it, too, and talk with them about it. Discuss the subjects and courses in middle school. Think about which courses interest you and can best prepare you for high school. Also, think about the middle school activities in which you might like to take part.

Keep the booklet to use during your middle school years. Use it, along with other information, to help make choices and decisions about your studies and activities. You and your parents should ask your counselor, principal, or teacher for information about the program in the middle school you will attend. You also may visit the school and talk with the principal or one of the counselors to get more information. A visit to the school you will attend is a good way for you and your parents to find out more about the school and to see what it is like.

HOW SHOULD PARENTS USE THIS BOOKLET?

Use the information in this booklet to help your children make the most of their middle school years. Take time to read the booklet thoroughly so you may help them choose courses and activities which will best prepare them for high school. Take an active part in planning with them and supporting their efforts to succeed in school.

It will be important for you to read this booklet and discuss with your children the information in the first three chapters. You are also urged to read Chapter 4, *How Parents May Help Their Middle School Children*, which has been written especially for parents. It describes the development and characteristics of early adolescents and contains many suggestions parents may use to help children during the middle school years.

Parents who have questions or want further information about topics discussed in this booklet are urged to contact their children's counselors, teachers, or principals. They are interested in working closely with parents to help children plan for and succeed in middle school.

ABOUT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN VIRGINIA, BOOK 3

A PUBLICATION OF
VIRGINIA'S SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
IN COOPERATION WITH
THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Sincere appreciation is expressed to the many individuals and representatives of institutions, agencies, and businesses who have contributed to the development of this material. In addition, gratitude is expressed for the invaluable guidance provided by the Educational Opportunities in Virginia Project Advisory Committee.
1985

John T. Casteen, III
Secretary of Education

S. John Davis
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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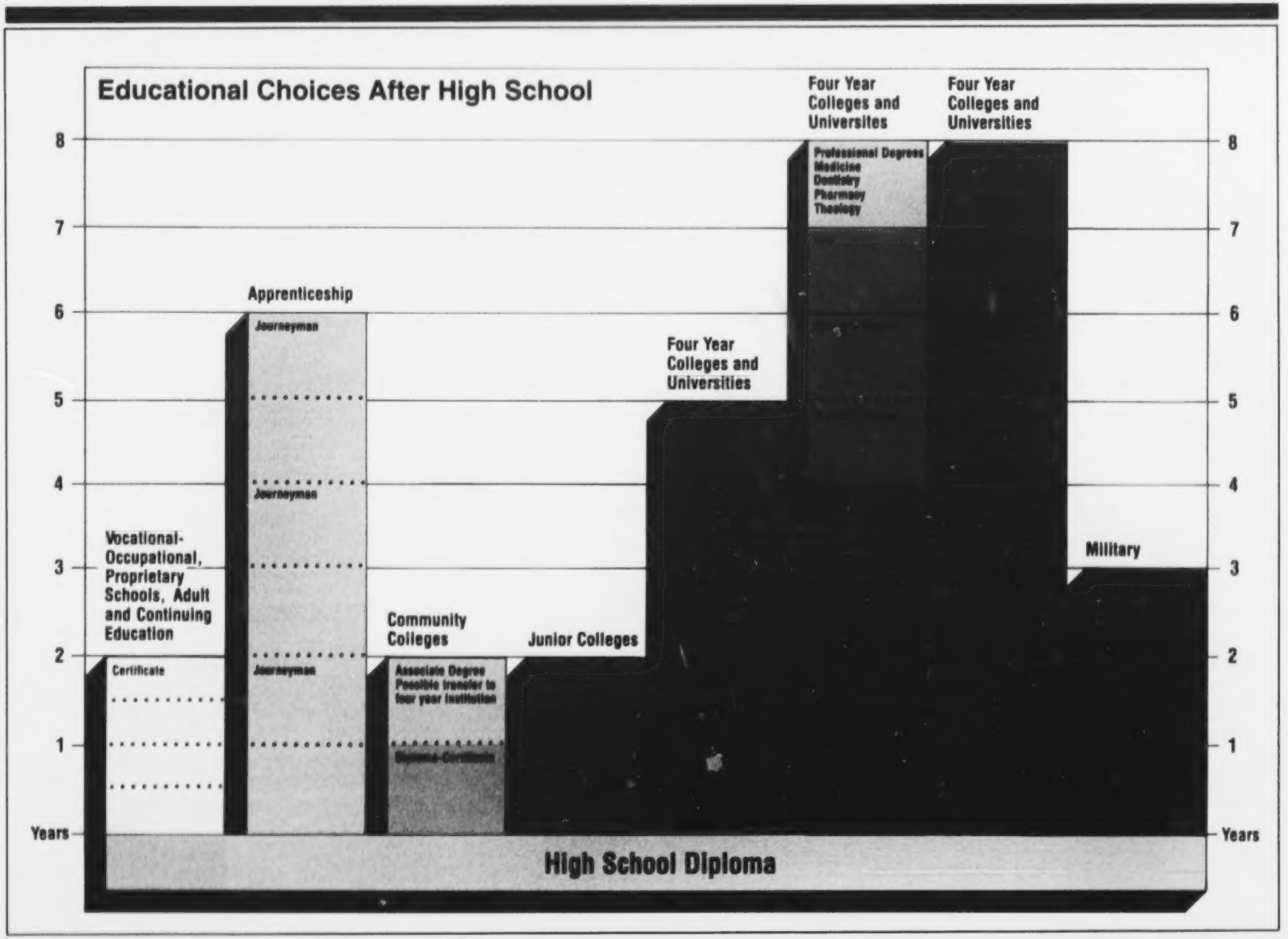
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Four Year Colleges and Universities
Professional Degrees
Medicine
Dentistry
Pharmacy
Theology
Apprenticeship
Journeyman
Journeyman
Journeyman
Four Year Colleges and Universities
Vocational-Occupational, Proprietary Schools, Adult and Continuing Education
Certificate
Community Colleges
Associate Degree
Possible transfer to four year institution
Junior Colleges
Military
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
Years
High School Diploma

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL

Exciting changes are in store for you during your middle school years. As you enter early adolescence, you will grow in many ways, explore new ideas, and try new activities. You will learn more about yourself and your world. You will also begin to think more seriously about your education and the future.

Middle school is different in many ways from elementary school. Most likely you will be in a larger building with many more students than are in your present school. You will see some students who look older and more grownup than you and others who do not. There will be new friends to make, new courses to study, and much to learn.

Most middle schools have an orientation meeting to help new students get acquainted with their school. It may take place at the end of the year before you leave your elementary school, late in the summer before school opens, or during the first week you are in your new school. At this meeting you will be given information about middle school subjects and courses and will learn about the teachers and others who will work with you. You will find out what will be expected of you, activities in which you may take part, and other facts you will need to know. Many orientation meetings also include a tour of the school to help you find your way around.

Take time to understand the information you receive about your new school. Ask your teachers, counselor, and principal questions about anything you do not understand or for more information you may need. They are interested in helping you get off to a good start.

Student Responsibilities Because you are becoming more grown-up, you will have more freedom in making decisions about yourself, your studies, and your actions. With this freedom will come

greater responsibility. Being responsible means that you can be depended upon and trusted. One of your most important responsibilities will be to learn as much as you can from your studies. You can do this by attending classes, doing homework, and studying. Other important responsibilities will be to follow school rules about behavior, attendance, dress, and other matters.

Sometimes in middle school you may feel pressured to choose between doing what you and your parents believe is right for you and what other students seem to expect of you. These decisions may not always be easy ones. When you have hard decisions to make, talk with your parents. You and your parents may talk with your counselor or teachers if you need extra help in deciding. Making choices which are right for you, regardless of what other students may think or say, shows that you are becoming more responsible and grown-up.

Your middle school years are also a good time for learning how to be a responsible leader. Watch the student leaders in your middle school and notice what they do as leaders. Get involved in some activities in which you may try out and develop your own leadership skills. Doing this can help you develop skills which will be important to you in middle school, high school, and beyond.

Homeroom You will probably have a homeroom teacher and a homeroom to which you will go for a short time each morning before classes begin. Attendance is taken during this homeroom period, and students receive information about student activities, events of interest, and other topics. In some schools group discussions are held during homeroom period, or students talk with their homeroom teachers about matters of interest or concern. Sometimes you may have time to review the homework and study assignments you completed earlier.

Classes In middle school you may move from one classroom to another for different subjects and have more than one teacher. In some schools you may even have a different teacher for each subject you take. Each of your teachers will give you homework and study assignments. You will have to take to your classes the books and other materials you will need.

The middle school day is usually divided into class periods of equal time. Most of your classes will meet every day, but some may meet only once or twice a week. In either case, you will need to be prepared for your classes each time they meet.

It will be important for you to learn to work with each of your teachers. They will help you understand what they expect of you regarding class work, homework, studying, and student behavior.

Studying and Homework To do well in middle school, you must study and do homework for each subject you take. You will generally have to spend an average of one and a half or two hours every school day on studying and homework,

Some Suggestions to Help You with Studying and Homework

1 Attend all your classes. Listen carefully to information discussed in class, and participate in class discussions. Ask questions about any information which may seem unclear to you. You will find it useful to jot down a few words about each main idea presented so you may better remember them later.

2 Before you leave each class, write your study and homework assignments in a notebook you keep for this purpose.

3 Ask your teachers for help with classwork or homework assignments if you need it.

4 Be sure to bring home from school each day books and other materials you will need to complete your assignments.

5 Use the same time each day for studying and homework. Do not allow this time to be interrupted by telephone calls or other activities.

6 Divide this study time among your subjects.

7 Have a quiet place at home in which to work. It is helpful to have a desk or table, a comfortable chair, and good lighting.

8 Be sure to have pencils, pens, paper, a dictionary, a ruler, and other items needed to complete your work.

9 Write down short sentences or phrases about important facts and ideas as you study.

10 Do all of your homework and studying every day.

11 Ask your parents for help with homework or study assignments when you need it.

12 Check your homework each day to be sure it is completed. Go over it with your parents, and discuss what you have learned.

Some Suggestions to Help You Study for a Test

1 Start studying for the test early—about ten days to two weeks before the test is to be given.

2 Set up a study schedule and stick to it. Your study schedule should include the times you will spend preparing for the test and what you will study each time. Allow more time in your schedule for harder topics than for easier ones.

3 Use your class notes, study notes, and textbooks to get ready for the test.

4 In beginning to study, look over topics about which you need more information or help.

5 If you need more information or help, be sure to get it as soon as possible. Do *not* wait.

6 In studying, review your materials carefully. Look for important ideas and facts; ask yourself what they mean and how you may use them.

7 As you study, you may find it helpful to underline important ideas and facts in your class and study notes.

8 Review several times the information about which you will be tested.

9 At the end of each study session, it can be helpful to have your parents ask you questions about what you have learned.

10 Be sure to eat well and get enough exercise and rest during the time you are getting ready for a test.

11 Get a good night's sleep the night before the test, and eat a good breakfast the day of the test.

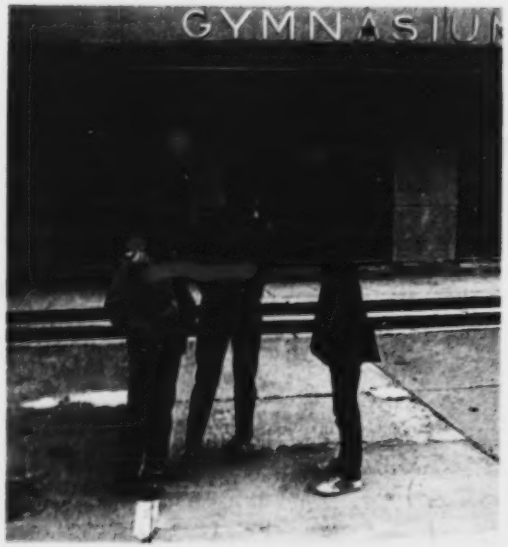
about 30 minutes for each subject. Sometimes you may also need to do some work on weekends.

Extracurricular Activities Most middle schools have many different activities in which students may take part. These are called extracurricular activities. They include interest clubs, organizations, intramural sports, and school service projects. You will find more information about these activities in Chapter 2 of this booklet.

Other Facts About Middle School Middle schools are different from elementary schools in other ways. You probably will have a locker in which to put your books and other personal belongings. You may have to buy and wear a uniform for physical education classes. And, unless there is a counselor in your elementary school, you will have a school counselor for the first time.

WHEN YOU NEED HELP

Sometimes middle school students have problems with which they need help. These may be about school work, courses, grades, activities, friendships,



home, and other matters of importance to them. Worrying about such problems can make it hard for them to study and learn. It also keeps them from enjoying school.

If you have any problems in middle school, get help as soon as possible. There are many people who are interested in you and will want to help you. Talk with your parents about your concerns. Feel free to talk with your counselor, teachers, or principal. The counselor is especially trained to help students with their problems and decisions.

WHAT MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE LIKE

Middle school students, ages 11 to 14, are different from each other in many ways. For example, they look different from each other and often have different likes, dislikes, and interests. They also may differ from each other in what they are able to do and how they feel about things. But they are very much alike in other ways, especially in the ways in which they grow and change while they are in middle school.

Physical Changes During their middle middle school years most students grow taller and heavier and change very quickly. Their faces and bodies become more grown-up, and they begin to look more like teenagers than children. Girls usually begin this rapid growth earlier than boys. Students in this age group often have a lot of energy one moment and feel tired the next.

Some students do not begin to grow and change as early as others. They may wonder why they are not growing and changing as others are. Because each person is special and unique, we grow at somewhat different rates. Thus, this period of rapid growth may begin at dif-

ferent times for different boys and girls. For some, it starts while they are still in elementary school. For others, this growth may not begin until the early high school years. Students who grow and change a little later than others need not worry. These changes will occur.

Social Changes Middle school students are usually very interested in making new friends. They want to be liked and part of a group. At the same time, they often feel shy and unsure of themselves. They are not sure how to act in social situations with other boys and girls their own ages. Some students, wanting to be accepted, even try to act and look like others, rather than just being themselves. By the time they begin high school, however, most students have learned the social skills they need to feel more comfortable with others.

Emotional Changes Many middle school students have changes in moods quite often. Their moods go quickly from high to low, and back again, almost without warning. They are usually sensitive, and their feelings get hurt quite easily. They also spend time daydreaming.

Independence Middle school students need certain kinds of help and advice from parents, teachers, and other adults. But they also want to become more independent. They want to be free to decide about many things, especially about their activities, friends, and clothing. Sometimes students want to make decisions their parents think they are not ready to make. When this happens, they may have arguments about what to do. To avoid arguments, students and parents should talk together. They should try to agree upon those decisions students may make, those which parents should make, and those which they should make together.

Becoming Accustomed to Your New Self As you can see, the middle school years bring many changes to which students must become accustomed. These changes are a natural part of growing up. During these years students discover more about who they are and what is right for them.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES

Middle school students usually take six subjects each semester. Some of these are *required* subjects which all students must take. Others are *elective* courses which students may choose to take according to their interests and abilities.

Grades 6 and 7 Middle school students are required to take certain subjects in grades 6 and 7. In most middle schools they may also choose one elective course each semester. In some schools an elective course may last the

Required Subjects in Grades 6 and 7

Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies
Health and Physical Education

Some Elective or Exploratory Courses in Grades 6 and 7

Art
Business (Grade 7)
Careers
Creative Writing
Foreign Language (Grade 7)
Home Economics
Industrial Arts
Music (Band, Chorus, and Orchestra)

entire school year. Elective courses for students in these grades are sometimes called *exploratory courses.*

Grade 8 The subjects which students in grade 8 are required to take vary from school to school. Students in grade 8 generally may choose one elective course each semester, or one full-year elective.

Subjects in Grade 8

Language Arts
*Mathematics
*Science
Social Studies
Health and Physical Education

*Instead of 8th-grade mathematics or science, students who have done well in 6th- and 7th-grade mathematics or science courses may choose to take 9th-grade level mathematics or science courses. These courses can be counted as one of the mathematics or science courses required to earn a high school diploma.

Some Elective Courses in Grade 8

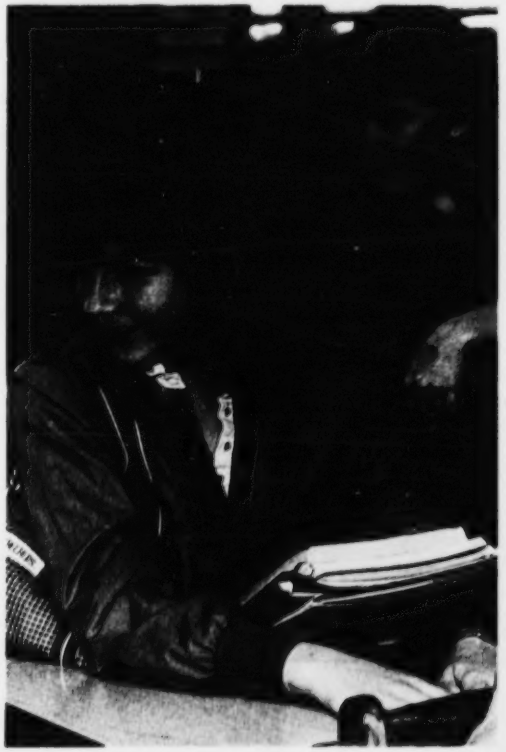
Art
Business
Computer Programming
Creative Writing
*Foreign Languages
General Music
Home Economics
Industrial Arts
Music (Band, Chorus, and Orchestra)
Personal Typing

*Successful completion of a 9th-grade level foreign language course counts as part of the foreign language requirements for a high school diploma.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND COURSES

You have worked hard and learned many things in elementary school. In middle school you will have the opportunity to improve your skills and develop new ones. You will learn more about subjects you have already studied and will study new subjects as well. You will learn new ideas, new ways of thinking, how to solve problems, and how to use knowledge.

Your middle school education is an important step toward high school. It will benefit you to choose middle school courses which can best prepare you for high school. You and your parents should consider carefully which academic, advanced, and vocational courses you should take. For example, courses such as Algebra I, foreign language, industrial arts, and advanced courses in grade 8 can provide a strong background for high school work. Taking these courses in middle school will also give you more choices of academic, advanced, and vocational courses in high school. The following sections of this chapter tell about middle school subjects and courses and what you may expect to learn in them.



Language Arts In grades 6 and 7 this subject is usually called Language Arts; in grade 8 it is often called English. These courses will teach you to communicate better with others and understand information and ideas. You will learn skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and spelling. You will also read and learn about many kinds of writing, such as novels, poetry, plays, and short stories. This will increase your knowledge of people and ideas, and help you enjoy different kinds of writing. What you learn in this subject can help you in all the other courses you will take.

You will probably take one Language Arts or English course each year you are in middle school.

Some Language Arts or English Courses

Advanced English
Creative Writing
Dramatic Arts
English
Introduction to Journalism
Language Arts
Reading
Remedial Reading
Speech and Dramatics

Mathematics This subject will help you understand mathematical ideas and improve your skills in thinking and solving problems. You also will learn to understand and use numbers and mathematical rules and signs. Your growing knowledge of mathematics will be useful to you in other subjects such as science and vocational education courses. If you do well in mathematics in grades 6 and 7, you may take Algebra I in grade 8.

Some Mathematics Courses

- Algebra I
- General Mathematics
- Pre-Algebra

Science Studying science will help you learn more about plants, animals, and the physical world. You will learn about topics such as plant and animal life, matter and energy, scientific laws, and the use of science in technology and daily living. Through your science courses you will learn how to use information to answer questions and solve scientific problems. You also will learn how to use laboratory equipment and materials.

Some Science Courses

- Advanced Science
- Earth Science
- Earth/Space Science
- Life Science
- Physical Science
- Science

Social Studies This subject will give you a clearer understanding of the United States and other nations and how they get along with each other. You will also learn how to become a responsible citizen.

In grade 6 you will study countries and people of the world and how they have lived throughout the ages. You will learn about the history, geography, economics, governments, beliefs, and problems of many nations. You will find out how and why nations depend upon each other.

Social studies courses in grade 7 are about life in Virginia and the United States from the mid-1800's to the present. You will learn about our history, government, economics, and geography during this period. In addition, you will study current events and problems of our state and nation.

In social studies courses in grade 8 you will study citizenship and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. You will learn about the American legal, political, and economic systems; local, state, and federal governments; and the different people who live in the United States.

Social studies courses will help you develop some important skills. You will learn how to judge and use information, and how to use maps, globes, and charts. These skills will help you in other school subjects.

Foreign Language Studying a foreign language teaches you how to communicate with people who speak that language. In foreign language courses you will learn to speak, read, write, and understand the language you study. You will also learn about the people and customs in countries where the language is spoken.

It is a good idea to begin studying a foreign language while you are in middle school.

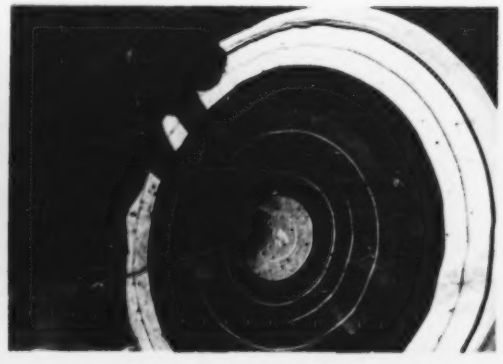
Some Social Studies Courses

American Humanities
History, Government, and Geography
Introduction to 20th Century American History
Law, Economics, and You
Middle School World Studies
Social Studies
United States History and Government

Some Foreign Language Courses

Exploratory French
Exploratory German
Exploratory Languages and Cultures
Exploratory Latin
Exploratory Spanish
French I
German I
Introduction to Foreign Languages
Latin I
Spanish I

The Arts The arts include art, drama, dance, and music. Courses in the arts will help you to explore and develop your abilities and interests in these subjects. They can also help you appreciate and enjoy the arts.



Some Courses in the Arts

Advanced Strings
Band
Beginning Strings
Choir
Chorus
Dance
Drama
Exploratory Art
Exploratory Drama
Exploratory Music
Music Appreciation
Orchestra

Health and Physical Education These subjects are often taught as parts of the same course. In health education you will study mental health; nutrition; personal growth and health; safety and first aid; tobacco, alcohol, and drug abuse; and the prevention and control of disease. In physical education you will learn about and participate in physical fitness activities and individual and team sports. You will develop skills for many sports, too. You will probably take a health and physical education course in each of your middle school grades.

Vocational Education Courses in vocational education help you get acquainted with a number of occupations. These courses will give you a clearer picture of your abilities and interests in certain kinds of work. They will also prepare you to take vocational education courses in high school.

Some Vocational Exploratory Courses

Business Exploration and Personal Typing
Education for Employment
Exploratory Agriculture
Exploring Technology
Industrial Arts
Introduction to Occupational Home Economics
Maintenance and Repair
Teen Living

Elective Courses Elective courses, the courses you may choose, help you learn more about subjects of special interest to you. In addition, they help prepare you for courses you may want or need to take in high school. Because your electives are important to you, you will want to choose them carefully. Your parents, counselor, and teachers can help you make these choices. Foreign languages, arts, and vocational education courses are usually counted as elective courses.

Advanced Courses Most middle schools offer advanced courses in subjects such as English, mathematics, and science. In advanced courses, students are expected to do work more difficult than the work in most other middle school courses. Students may take these courses if their teachers and counselors decide the students are ready to do this more difficult work. Their decisions are based upon students' grades, classwork, and scores on tests. Advanced course work will help you in high school and beyond. You should take as many advanced courses in middle school as you are allowed to take.

Remedial Courses Some students may need extra help in certain subjects. Middle schools have remedial courses to give these students the help they need. These courses are most often offered in language arts and mathematics. Students take these courses if their counselors and teachers decide the courses will benefit them.

Middle School Courses Which Help Meet High School Graduation Requirements Students whose teachers and counselors think they are ready may choose to take one or two high school-level courses in grade 8. In most middle schools these courses are Algebra I and a foreign language. Taking these courses in middle school helps meet some of the course requirements for high school graduation. This also allows students to take more courses in high school so they are better prepared for college, advanced vocational training, or employment.

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDIES

Your work in middle school will be very important to you. It will prepare you for high school. It also will prepare you for your education and work after you graduate from high school. The middle school years will be a time for you to learn, to explore, and to think in new and different ways. Choose your courses carefully and learn as much as you can from them. Ask for help when you need it from your parents, teachers, and counselor. Take advantage of the many opportunities to learn so you may get the most from your middle school years.

CHAPTER 2

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

FIND OUT ABOUT SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

This chapter is about the many special programs and activities offered in the middle schools of Virginia. At the end of the chapter there are suggestions to help you find out more about them.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

Each middle school student has a counselor. Having one may be new for you, but you will soon discover that a counselor can be of help to you. By working with your counselor you can learn many things about yourself, such as what you do best, the kinds of subjects and activities which most interest you, the ways in which you think, act, and feel, and what you like and do not like to do. Your counselor will help you use this information to make decisions about yourself and to choose subjects, courses, and activities which best suit you.

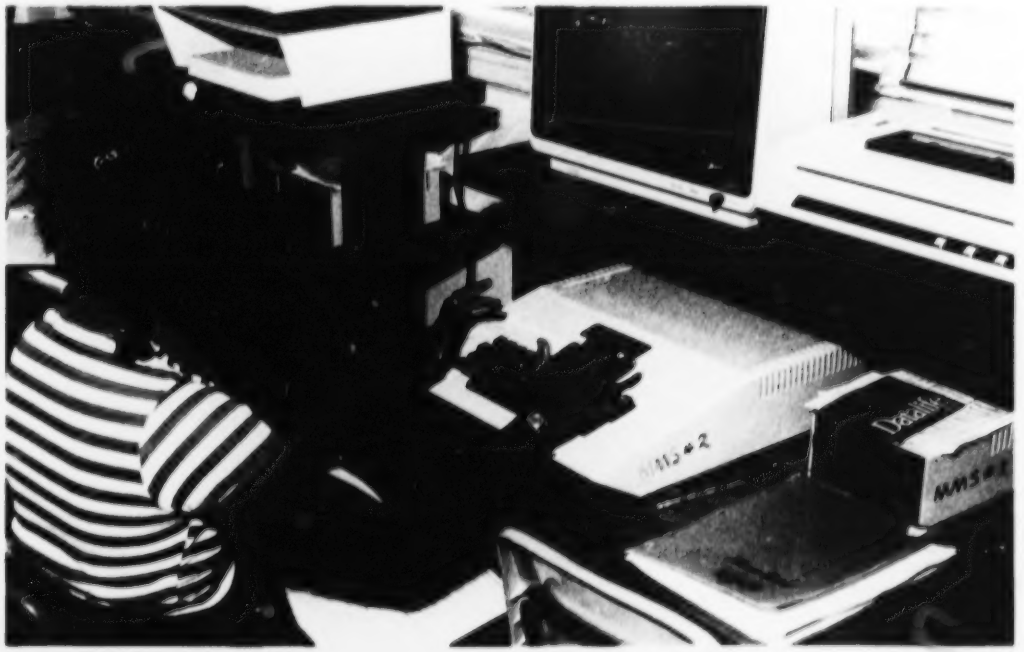
Counselors help students in other ways. They work with students alone or in small groups to help them deal with their problems and concerns. Through such counseling, students can learn how to get along better with friends, parents, and other adults, and take greater responsibility for themselves.

Counselors also work in classrooms with larger groups of students. They lead activities to help students learn how to make decisions about themselves and school, find out about their interests, understand the meaning of their scores on tests, and many other topics important to middle school students.

Counselors work with parents, too. They advise parents about ways in which they may help their children. They may meet with parents alone or in groups. Sometimes they work with students and parents together to help them make decisions about school or to solve problems.

You may have the same counselor throughout the middle school grades, or a different one each school year. Coun-

selors meet with students before and after school, as well as during the school day. Meet with your counselor regularly, and if problems arise, feel free to ask your counselor for help. You can learn more about the guidance and counseling program in your middle school by talking with your counselor, principal, and teachers.



PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Programs for gifted and talented students are offered in all middle schools in Virginia. These programs give students the chance to develop their unusual abilities or talents. Some students in programs for the gifted and talented are in regular classes part of the school day and in some special classes for part of each day or week. Others are in special classes in special schools full time.

To be chosen for the program, students must be outstanding in one or more of the following ways:

- Have a high level of intelligence
- Show especially high achievement in at least one subject area
- Have special talent in art, drama, music, or dance
- Have special talent in vocational areas, such as electronics, data processing, home economics, or agriculture
- Show special leadership ability and skills
- Think creatively to get new and different answers to problems

Students who are in programs for the gifted and talented in elementary school usually stay in the programs when they enter middle school. If you are interested in being in the program for gifted and talented in your middle school, talk with your principal, teachers, or counselor in your present school or in the middle school you will attend.

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM

In many schools middle school students may choose to go to summer school. They may take courses which they could not fit into their schedules during the regular school year. Or they may take courses of special interest to them. Some students repeat courses they have already taken in order to learn more about those subjects. Sometimes middle school students may be permitted to take courses during the summer for high school credits. In some schools a fee is charged for attending summer school. Your counselor, principal, and teachers will be able to tell you more about this program.

CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM

In the career education program you will participate in activities to help you learn more about careers and yourself. You will learn about many kinds of work, your interests, and some careers in which workers have interests like yours. You will also find out how what you learn in school is important in careers. In many middle schools students participate in career education activities in their regular classes with the help of their teachers and counselors. Students in some middle schools also may take career exploratory courses.

Many kinds of career education activities are usually offered to help middle school students learn about careers and themselves. Sometimes people come to school to talk to classes or small groups of students about their careers. Students also go on field trips to businesses and industries in their communities. They may spend a day on the job with someone in a career of special interest to them or talk with workers in these careers. In some schools students use computers to learn about careers. Most schools have career materials in classrooms, guidance offices, libraries, and career resource centers.

Some students either get their first part-time jobs while in middle school or are looking forward to getting jobs when they are in high school. In your career education activities you may learn how to look for part-time work, complete a job application, and have a job interview.

You will not have to decide in middle school about your future career. But you will learn many things to help you make that decision later. You may get more information about the career education program in your school by talking with your teachers, principal, and counselor.

TESTING PROGRAM

You will take several kinds of tests in middle school. Some tests are required of all students in certain classes or grades. For example, all students in grade 8 must take certain tests. Students may decide to take other tests to help them learn more about themselves. Through the testing program in middle school you can get a better idea of what you have learned in school subjects—those in which you are strong, and those in which you may need more work. You can also get information about your interests, skills, and talents. This information can help you choose the school subjects and courses which will be best for you. The following sections will tell you about some of the tests which middle school students usually take:

Achievement and Ability Tests In middle school you will take tests which are prepared by your teachers. They may be written tests or performance tests. In performance tests you are asked to do certain things to show what you have learned from your studies. For example, in a science performance test you might be asked to show that you can do a certain kind of scientific experiment. These teacher-made tests are given to find out what you have learned so you and your teachers may work together to help you learn more.

In addition to these tests, you will take other tests which all students in the same grade must take. For example, all eighth-grade students must take an *achievement* test and an *educational ability* test. Your scores on the achievement test will give you an idea of your progress in school subjects such as mathematics, language arts, social studies, and other subjects. Your scores on educational ability tests will give you an idea of how well you seem able to learn the things you are taught.

Career Development Tests You will also take some career development tests in middle school so you may better understand your interests, what you like to do, and your ability to learn in different subjects. Some career development tests help you understand your work values—what you think is important in a career. Helping other people through one's work is an example of a work value. Knowing these kinds of information about yourself can help you choose the middle school subjects, courses, and activities which are best for you. It will also help you later in planning your high school studies and choosing a career.

In some schools, career development tests are given to all students in a certain grade. In any middle school grade, however, you may ask your counselor to arrange for you to take career development tests. Your counselor will explain to you and your parents the results of tests you take in school. You and your parents may find out more about the testing program in your school by talking with your principal, counselor, or teachers.

PROGRAMS FOR HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

Although all students have special needs, some students need special kinds of teaching and services to help them learn. Middle schools in Virginia, therefore, offer special education programs for these students. To be in the program, the students' parents and schools must agree that this is the program which will best help the students learn.

Students in the program attend special education classes only for those subjects in which they need special teaching in order to learn. The classes are taught by teachers who are especially trained to help these students. Some students are in one or two special education classes daily for certain subjects and are in regular classes the rest of the school day. Others are in regular classes for all subjects and get extra help from resource teachers for some subjects. In some cases, students are in special education classes for all their subjects. Like other students, students in special education programs take part in guidance and counseling, career education, extracurricular activities, and other programs and activities offered in their schools.

Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P.) A plan for learning is developed for each student in a special education program. This I.E.P. is planned by the student's parents, teachers, and other school staff members. Sometimes the student may take part in the planning. The I.E.P. tells what courses and classes the student will take and what the student should learn. It may include physical education courses, vocational education courses, and career guidance and counseling activities, according to what the student needs to succeed in school.

The I.E.P. also tells what other services will be provided to help the student learn. Some examples of these *related services* are counseling, speech or hearing therapy, social work services, transportation, and occupational and physical therapy.

The I.E.P. of every student in a special education program is reviewed each year. As the student learns, the I.E.P. is changed so the student may receive the education and services which will be most helpful.

Alternative Day Schools and Regional Programs Some special education students may need certain kinds of educational programs which are not offered in their schools. When this occurs, the students attend schools in other places

which offer the programs they need. Every effort is made to find schools as close as possible to students' homes. There are no costs to parents for this education or for transportation of students. Your principal, counselor, and teachers can give you and your parents more information about special education programs in your school division.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK/VISITING TEACHER PROGRAM

Some students may have difficulties outside of school which make it hard for them to learn or do their school work. School social workers and visiting teachers help students and their families clear up these difficulties. Often they assist students and their families to get needed services from community programs and agencies which can best serve them. Your principal and counselor can tell you more about the social work/visiting teacher program in your school.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

Some students may have problems in areas such as learning, getting along with other people, or being part of school life. Teachers, counselors, and parents try to help these students solve their problems. Sometimes, the school psychologist is asked to help. The school psychologist usually talks with the students, their parents, and teachers. They may also use special kinds of activities to discover why the students are having these difficulties. The psychologist then suggests ways to help the students. Your principal and school counselor will be able to tell you and your parents more about the school psychology program in your school.

HOMEBOUND AND HOSPITAL PROGRAMS

If students are ill or injured and cannot attend school for a long period of time, special teachers are available to teach them. These teachers go to hospitals or to the students' homes and help them keep up with their studies. Parents of students who may need these services should contact the principal or counselor in the schools their children attend.

LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM

While you are in middle school, you will find the school library an excellent place to get information for your studies.

You may also use the library to borrow books for leisure reading. In addition to books, most middle school libraries have films, filmstrips, magazines, microfiche, career information materials, records, tapes, slides, and other media. Some libraries have computers and computer programs. Your school librarian will show you how to use the library and the books, equipment, and materials that are kept there. Talk with your school librarian to learn more about your school library and the help and materials available to you.

SCHOOL NURSE PROGRAM

There may be a school nurse in your middle school. If there is, you will find

that school nurses can help you in many important ways. They teach students about good health, advise them about health problems, and give certain kinds of health care in school. If students seem to need medical care from doctors, dentists, or other persons, school nurses get in touch with the parents. Sometimes, they also advise parents about where to get these services for their children. The school nurse is there to help you with any health concerns you may have in middle school.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

You will have the opportunity to take part in some activities other than classes in middle school. These are student activities for which grades are not given. You choose the activities in which you will participate according to your interests and available time. Extracurricular activities may take place at special times during the school day or may be held after school.

The kinds of activities offered vary from school to school. In most schools you may join interest clubs, such as aerobics, art, computers, drama, foreign languages, homemaking, industrial arts,

library and media, mathematics, school newspaper, and science. There are also intramural sports, such as basketball, field hockey, and gymnastics, and music activities, such as band, chorus, and orchestra. Some schools have special projects, field trips, and social activities which are usually held after school.

To choose your extracurricular activities, find out which activities are offered and when. Think about which ones may interest you. You should also think about the time these activities will take and the time you will need for studying and homework. Consider these points carefully. Then choose those activities which seem most interesting. It is a good idea to select only one or two extracurricular activities each school year so you will have enough time for studying, homework, and other responsibilities. Keep in mind that extracurricular activities should add to, not take away from, your studies.

Participating in extracurricular activities gives you a chance to meet new people and make new friends. Through these activities you can try out and learn new things, find out more about your interests and abilities, and develop your leadership skills. For more information about extracurricular activities in your school, talk with your teachers, counselor, or principal.

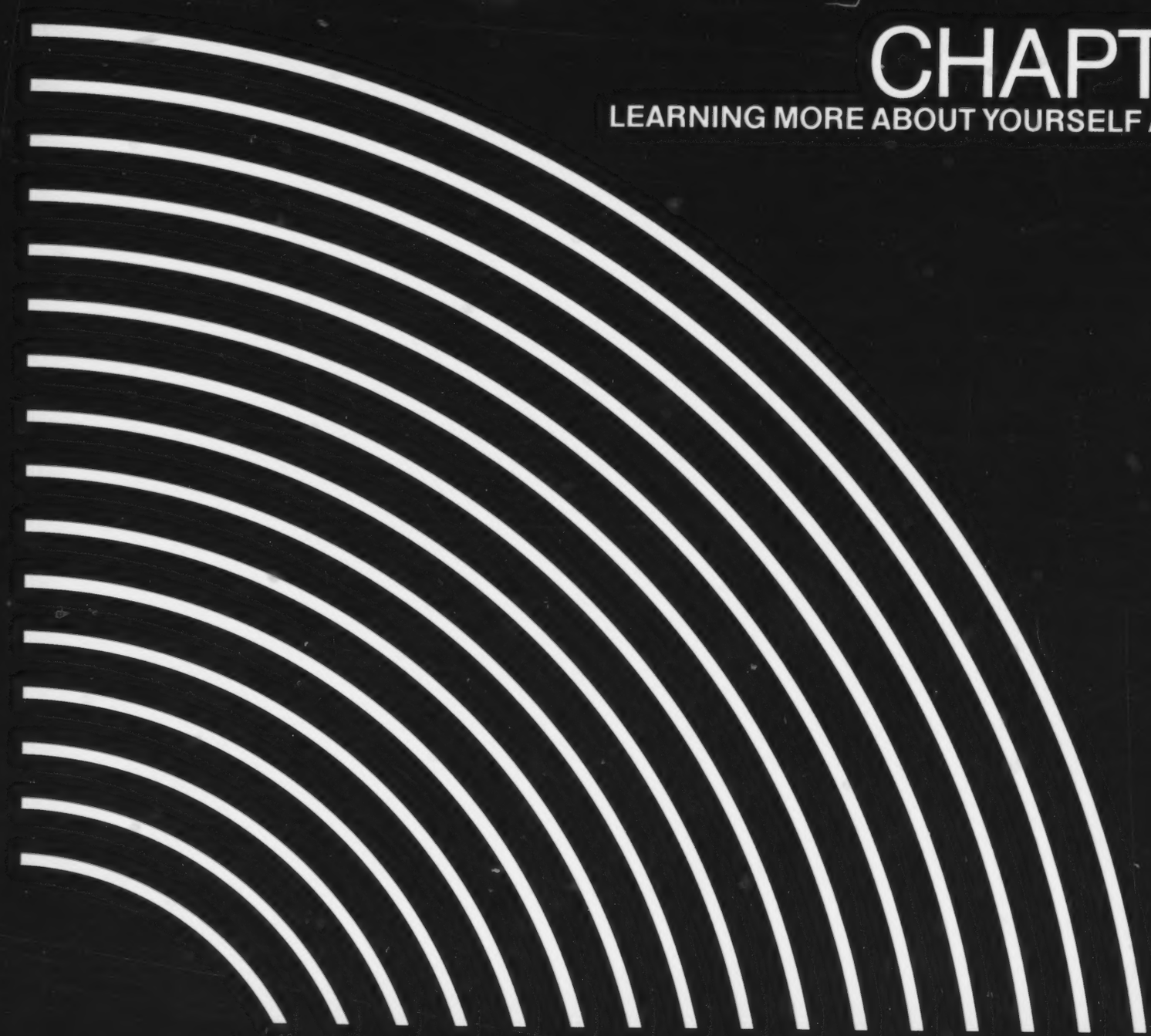
For More Information You and your parents may get additional information about the many programs described in this chapter by contacting the following:

Superintendent's Office in your local school division

Office of Public Information and Publications
Virginia Department of Education
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23216

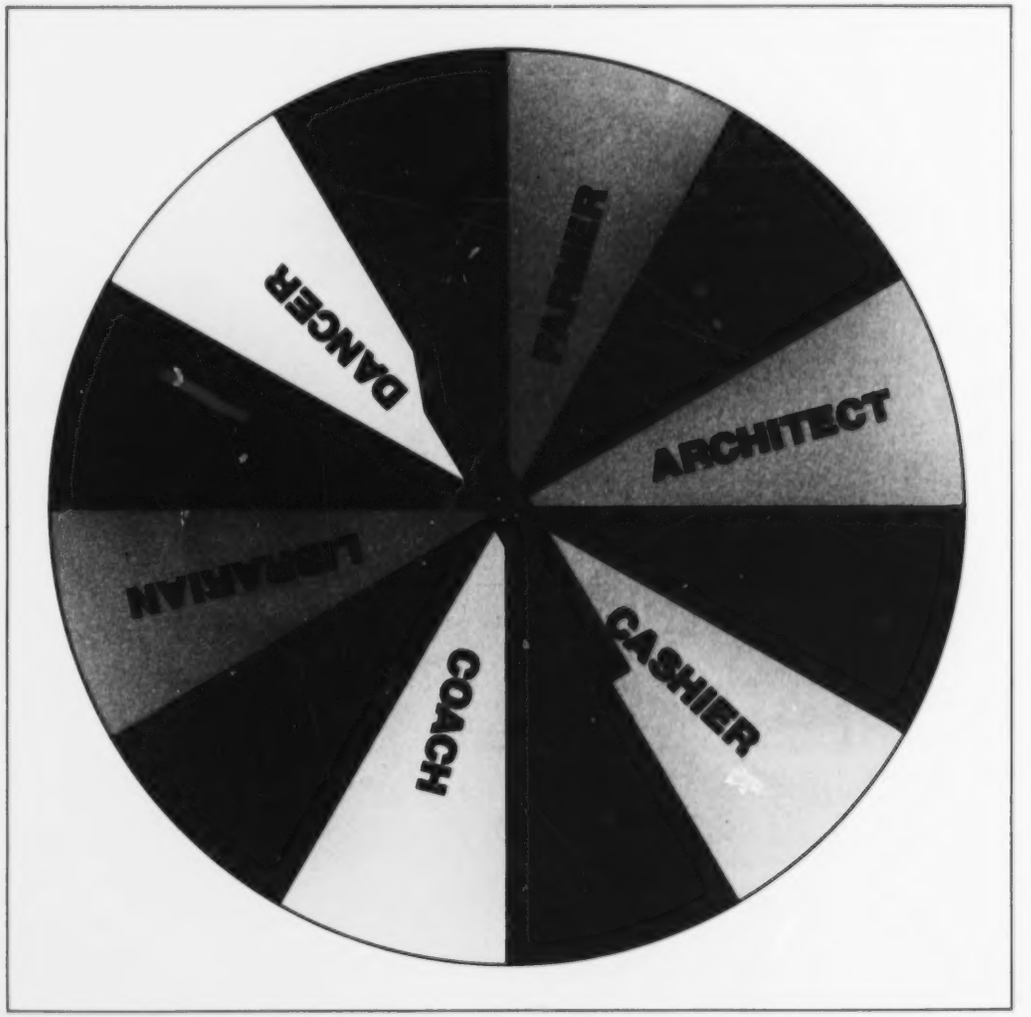
CHAPTER 3

LEARNING MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND CAREERS



GETTING READY FOR YOUR FUTURE

When you are in grades 7 and 8, you will begin to plan your high school program of studies and choose some of the courses you will take there. Because these plans and choices will be important to you, you will want to plan wisely. A good way to prepare for this planning is to learn as much as possible in middle school about yourself and careers. A career is what you will do with your life, especially the kind of work you will do. You will not choose a career until you are older. Learning about yourself and careers in middle school, however, can help you choose a high school program leading toward careers which may interest you. You will have many chances later to change your plans if other careers become more interesting. This part of the booklet has information, suggestions, and activities to help you learn more about yourself and careers.



LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF

Finding out more about yourself can be helpful and fun. You probably already know certain things about yourself, such as your favorite school subjects, sports, and music. Because you are growing and changing in many ways, this is a good time to take a new look at yourself.

Here are some ways to find out more about yourself:

- Talk with your parents about yourself. They have known you the longest and probably know you the best. They can tell you much about your abilities, strengths, and other characteristics.
- Talk with your teachers and principal about yourself. They will have many ideas which can be helpful.
- Ask your counselor to help you learn more about yourself. Through counseling you can get a better understanding of your abilities and talents, what interests you most, how you feel, think, and act, and what is important to you. You can learn how to use this information in choosing your school program and activities. You may take some tests as part of the counseling to get further information about yourself. The counselor can tell you what your scores on these tests mean and can also explain to you information from your student records about yourself, your school work, and the results of other tests you have taken in school.
- Talk with family members and friends who know you well. They can tell you many valuable things about yourself.

SOME EXERCISES TO HELP YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT YOURSELF

The exercises in this section will help you see yourself more clearly. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the items in the exercises which follow. Think about each item and answer it as well as you can. You may ask your counselor for help in completing any items with which you have difficulty. After you have finished, discuss your answers with your parents, counselor, teachers, family members, and others who know you well. These discussions can be another good way to find out more about yourself.

My Interests
Please complete the following statements.

The school subjects which most interest me are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My hobbies are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Check any of the following activities which seem of *high interest* to you.
You do *not* have to know how or be able to do them.

- ☐ Write stories, poems, or plays
- ☐ Fix engines
- ☐ Take care of animals
- ☐ Play a musical instrument or sing
- ☐ Do scientific experiments
- ☐ Play a sport
- ☐ Plant a garden
- ☐ Program a computer
- ☐ Teach children how to read
- ☐ Paint a picture
- ☐ Build a piece of furniture
- ☐ Sell in a store
- ☐ Take care of sick people
- ☐ Fly an airplane
- ☐ Fix a television set
- ☐ Work with numbers
- ☐ Help people find jobs
- ☐ Plan a building
- ☐ Use a typewriter
- ☐ Study ocean life
- ☐ Solve legal problems
- ☐ Protect the lives and safety of others
- ☐ Act in a play or television program

☐ Supervise the work of others in a factory

☐ Work in the forest to protect trees and wildlife

☐ Plan a party

☐ Cook food

☐ Plan how to spend money

☐ Help people who are in trouble

☐ Announce sporting events

☐ Raise money for poor people

☐ Collect things

Look again at the activities you have marked as being of *high interest* to you. Decide which *three* of the items you checked are of *highest interest* to you and write them below.

The three activities of highest interest to me are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Which of the school subjects you chose as most interesting can help you with the activities of highest interest to you?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Which of your hobbies are related to the three activities of highest interest to you?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My Abilities and Characteristics
Check any of the following items which are *true of you* most of the time.

I am:

☐ A hard worker.

☐ Able to get along well with others.

☐ Friendly.

☐ Interested in my school work.

- ☐ Shy.
- ☐ Patient.
- ☐ A leader.
- ☐ Understanding of others.
- ☐ Cooperative.
- ☐ Good at getting my ideas across to others through words.
- ☐ Good at persuading others to my way of thinking.
- ☐ Independent.
- ☐ A good student.
- ☐ Intelligent.
- ☐ Creative.
- ☐ Good at working with my hands and with tools.
- ☐ Good at working with ideas.
- ☐ Good at solving problems using numbers.
- ☐ Good at solving problems in science.
- ☐ Good at taking care of animals.
- ☐ Good at planning how to use my time.
- ☐ Good at getting information through reading.
- ☐ Good at showing others how to do things.
- ☐ Comfortable speaking before a group.
- ☐ Helpful to others when they have problems.
- ☐ Good in music, art, drama, or dance.
- ☐ Dependable.
- ☐ Good at finding new ways to solve problems.
- ☐ Interested in doing well in my studies and activities.
- ☐ Good at writing stories, poems, or plays.
- ☐ Good in sports.

Look at the items you have just checked as *true* of you most of the time. From these, choose the *five* which are most like you.

List those here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Things I Like To Do
Check any of the following items which are *true* of you most of the time.

I like to:

- ☐ Read.
- ☐ Build things.
- ☐ Be out-of-doors.
- ☐ Work with people.
- ☐ Work alone.
- ☐ Be popular.
- ☐ Lead others in activities.
- ☐ Take part in activities led by others.
- ☐ Plan and arrange activities.
- ☐ Be neat in my work.
- ☐ Have work in which I can do many different things.
- ☐ Have work in which I can do the same things over again.
- ☐ Work with my hands.
- ☐ Finish things on time.
- ☐ Work with ideas.
- ☐ Work independently.
- ☐ Do work that is easy.
- ☐ Do my best at all times.
- ☐ Show others how to do things.
- ☐ Be told how to do my work.
- ☐ Do work that is difficult.
- ☐ Do work in which I can be creative.
- ☐ Write reports, stories, or poems.
- ☐ Use machinery and tools.
- ☐ Paint a picture.
- ☐ Dance.
- ☐ Sing or play a musical instrument.
- ☐ Do work in which I can move around a lot.
- ☐ Talk with people.
- ☐ Travel.
- ☐ Do gymnastics.
- ☐ Work with numbers.
- ☐ Do work which will cause others to notice me.
- ☐ Do work in which I am free to make decisions.

- ☐ Do work which requires physical strength.
- ☐ Do work in which I must be very careful.
- ☐ Be in high places.
- ☐ Play sports.
- ☐ Act in plays.
- ☐ Finish work that I have begun.
- ☐ Prepare food.
- ☐ Sew.
- ☐ Take care of plants or animals.
- ☐ Sell things.
- ☐ Help other people.

Look at the items you have marked showing what you like to do. Choose the *six* which you like better than the others and list them here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

What I Have Learned From These Activities.

In doing these activities, I have learned the following about myself:

1. I am most interested in _____
   _____
   _____

2. I am good at _____
   _____
   _____

3. I most like to _____
   _____
   _____

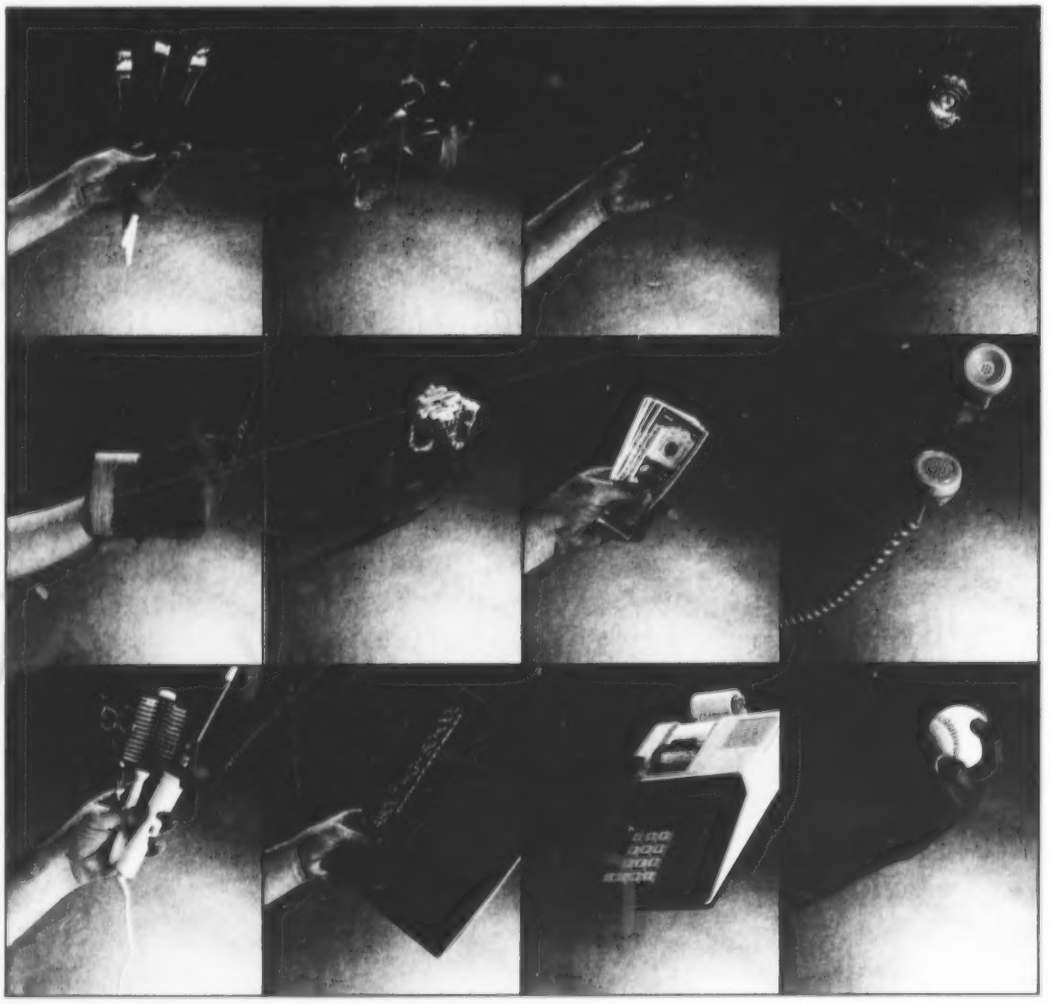
4. I am a person who _____
   _____
   _____

LEARNING ABOUT CAREERS

There are over 20,000 types of occupations, or kinds of work, in our nation. Each occupation is part of a career field. In learning about careers you will discover the following:

1. There are 12 career fields.
2. Workers in the same career field have similar interests although they may have different occupations.
3. In each of these career fields, there are many occupations.
4. Occupations in the same career field may require different kinds and amounts of education or training.

For example, one of the career fields is scientific careers. Workers in scientific occupations have strong interests in science and mathematics and like to solve problems. There are many occupations in this field, such as veterinarian, dentist, laboratory assistant, and weather observer. Although they have similar interests, people in these occupations do different kinds of work and need different kinds and amounts of education or training for their work.



Career Fields, Major Interests of Workers, and Some Occupations

Artistic	Showing ideas and feelings through the arts, such as painting, sculpture, dance, acting, writing, crafts, music, and modeling	Art teacher Dancer Disc jockey Model Orchestra conductor Photographer Radio announcer
Scientific	Using scientific and mathematical ideas and methods of collecting information, and solving problems	Botanist Geologist Medical laboratory assistant Orderly Surgeon Weather observer
Nature	Caring for plants and animals, mostly out-of-doors	Animal keeper Farmer Forester Livestock rancher Poultry farmer
Authority	Protecting people and property	FBI agent Fire captain Fish and game warden Park ranger Police officer

Career Fields, Major Interests of Workers, and Some Occupations

Mechanical	Using mechanical knowledge and skills, machines, and hand tools	Air traffic controller Architect Building inspector Radio repairer Safety engineer Test pilot
Industrial	Doing specific, repeated activities in factories to produce goods	Baker Candy machine operator Inspector Laboratory tester Machine shop supervisor
Business Detail	Doing office work which requires accuracy and careful attention	Bookkeeper Cashier Medical record clerk Radio dispatcher School secretary Telephone operator
Persuasive	Selling goods or services for a profit	Auctioneer Buyer Insurance agent School equipment sales representative Travel agent

Career Fields, Major Interests of Workers, and Some Occupations

Accommodating	Serving others, often one-to-one	Camp counselor Driving teacher Hair stylist Newspaper carrier Recreation leader
Humanitarian	Helping people who have mental, social, career, medical, or educational problems	Art therapist Counselor Nurse Physician assistant Social worker Teacher of the blind
Social-Business	Helping people by using skills in words and numbers	Accountant Lawyer Librarian Newspaper editor Real estate agent Teacher Teacher aide
Physical Performing	Doing physical activities, usually before an audience	Coach Physical education teacher Professional athlete Sports instructor Umpire

*Adapted from *Guide for Occupational Exploration*, U.S. Department of Labor, 1979

How to Explore Careers

There are many ways to learn about careers. A good way to begin is to know what the 12 career fields are and to find out about the interests of people who work in them. Doing this can help you discover the career fields in which workers have interests most like yours. You may then select two or three occupations from these career fields related to your interests and get more information about them.

For example, you may be interested in helping people with their problems. If you look at the career fields on pages 33 to 35 of this booklet, you will find that workers in humanitarian careers have interests like yours. You will see listed there some occupations in the humanitarian career field. Because only a few of the many humanitarian occupations are included in this booklet, you should also use the career information materials in your school to find out what other occupations are in this field. After you have done this, choose one or two occupations from the humanitarian career field which seem most interesting and learn as much as you can about them.

In exploring an occupation, try to get the following information:

- The type of work done by people in the occupation
- The interests, skills, and abilities of these workers
- The kind of education or training needed to prepare for and enter the occupation
- Subjects in middle and high school which can help prepare you for this occupation

You may also want to find out about the following:

- The working conditions (Is the work inside, outside, or both? Noisy or quiet? High above ground or below ground?)
- The physical demands of the work (Is this light, heavy or medium work? Are workers required to do things such as seeing, talking, hearing, lifting, bending, stooping, and climbing?)

- Worker tasks (How much do workers deal with information, people, or things in their work?)

You may get facts about careers from many sources. Your counselor, teachers, and librarians have books, kits, booklets, magazines, computer programs, films, and other career information materials you may use. You will also find career information materials at the public library. Here are some other ways to explore careers:

- Talk with your parents, teachers, counselors, and friends about occupations which interest you and find out what they know about them.
- Take part in school clubs and activities related to careers of interest to you. Examples of such clubs are the newspaper club, Future Farmers of America, the public speaking club, band, and orchestra.
- Do volunteer work related to careers in which you are interested. For example, you might volunteer to read stories to young children at the library, help a neighbor fix an automobile engine, or help your parents start a garden.
- Talk with people in jobs which interest you. Ask them questions about their work, the skills and abilities needed for it, and the kinds of education or training they have had.
- Visit businesses, offices, and factories where people have occupations you are exploring. See what they do on the job, and get information and ideas from them about their careers. Sometimes counselors and teachers arrange for students to visit workers in occupations of special interest to them.
- Attend career fairs in your school and community.
- Join community clubs and activities related to careers of interest to you, such as a photography club, church choir, 4-H club, or scout troop.
- Attend school assemblies and other school and community events about careers.
- Attend summer camp or a summer recreation program related to careers of interest. Many camps and local departments of recreation have programs in the arts, sports, computers, and other interest areas.
- When you become old enough to get a part-time job, try to get one in a career field which interests you.

USING INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF AND CAREERS TO PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE

The information you learn about yourself and careers can be of great value in planning your middle and high school programs of studies. Using this information can help you make choices and plans which will be best for you. Remember that you will have many chances later in middle school and high school to change your plans if you want to do so.

CHAPTER 4

HOW PARENTS MAY HELP THEIR MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILDREN

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

As your children begin their middle school education, they will also be entering early adolescence, a unique and special stage in their development. This stage, from approximately ages 11 to 14, is distinctly different in many ways from the childhood years which are ending and the adolescent period which will follow.

When children enter early adolescence, they begin to experience a series of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes, all of which occur within the span of a few years. They are faced with the challenging tasks of adjusting to these changes, becoming accustomed to their new and different selves, and discovering how they fit into their changing world.

At the same time early adolescents find themselves having to adapt to middle school, usually a larger, more complex situation than elementary school. Here they must learn to adjust to factors such as changing classes, having a different teacher for each subject, taking new or more advanced subjects, and having increased work and responsibility. Thus, the movement from elementary to middle school requires them to cope with many changes beyond those resulting from their own maturation.

One can well understand, therefore, why this is usually such a difficult stage for most children and why they especially need their parents' love, guidance, understanding, and encouragement. Parents play a central role in helping early adolescents experience healthy personal development as well as success in their middle school studies. Children are influenced by all that parents say and do in interactions with them. They are also affected by what parents do not say or do.

This chapter has been written to help parents better understand what early adolescents are like and how they may help their children develop during the middle school years. It contains more-detailed information about the characteristics and behaviors of early adolescents than that which is provided in earlier sections of this booklet. There are also suggestions about parenting techniques, how to help children succeed in their middle school studies, and where to get additional help if difficult concerns or problems arise.

WHAT EARLY ADOLESCENTS ARE LIKE

Although each child is unique, certain characteristics and behaviors are typical of children of the same ages. This is certainly true of children between the ages 11 to 14. In reading the following information about early adolescent development, it is important to bear in mind that some children enter this developmental stage somewhat earlier or later than their peers and that such differences are generally normal.

The advent of early adolescence usually brings considerable changes to children and their families. Gone are the affectionate, cooperative 10-year-olds who generally wanted to please their parents and were quite easy to get along with. Instead, parents often find their 11-to-14-year-olds moody, restless, unpredictable, and argumentative. Some parents, not realizing that these changes in moods and behavior are a normal part of this new stage, begin to worry about their children and wonder what has gone wrong. Parents can feel assured that most of the difficulties of this period will eventually pass, just as most of the trying behaviors of children during earlier difficult stages such as the "terrible two's" ended with time.

Most early adolescents grow and change with amazing speed. They become taller and heavier; their appetites increase; and their faces and bodies become more mature. Girls usually begin this accelerated growth between the ages of 8 and 14, while boys are likely to start somewhat later, between the ages of 10 and 15. With the onset of puberty, secondary sexual characteristics appear. Many early adolescents become concerned or even embarrassed about their changing bodies and bodily functions. By explaining and discussing these changes with their children, parents can help them understand and adapt to their new development.

Some children in this age group do not experience these expected physical changes as early as their peers. Because being like one's peers is so important to early adolescents, these children, particularly boys, tend to worry about being different and feel at a disadvantage when compared to others more advanced in their physical development. Children who develop later than their peers, therefore, require additional understanding and support from their parents to help them cope with these concerns.

Although early adolescents still look to their parents as models of behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and values, they also begin to look toward other adults and peers as models. Often they become strongly attached to teachers or other adults important in their lives. Because of their need to be liked and to feel that they are accepted and belong, peers become of prime importance to them. As part of their quest for belonging and acceptance, they try to look and behave as much like their friends as possible. This

is particularly true regarding clothing, hairstyles, and social activities.

Friends play an important role during these years. They provide not only friendship, but also the support necessary for developing self-understanding, personal beliefs, values, new social skills and behaviors, and a sense of identity independent of adults. Most early adolescents choose friends with interests, values, and temperaments similar to their own. Girls usually prefer to have a small group of close female friends. Boys are likely to have one close male friend and participate in activities with a larger, informal group of boys.

During this period there is increased interest in members of the other sex. From approximately ages 11 to 13, girls express this interest by spending much time talking about boys, while boys tease girls and show off for them. At these ages they usually feel more comfortable in groups while interacting with peers of the other sex.

The early adolescent stage is also characterized by extremes in feelings and behaviors. Highly sensitive to others' reactions to them, their feelings are easily hurt, and they frequently feel "picked-on." They tend to doubt themselves and feel insecure, are often moody and very emotional, and are apt to have frequent eruptions of anger. They are also inclined to be argumentative, defensive, careless, and loud. Rarely are they willing or able to listen to other peoples' points of view or admit their own faults.

Along with these characteristics and behaviors, early adolescents crave attention; almost any kind of attention seems better than none. They feel as if they are the center of their world, either being admired or criticized. In addition, they often feel misunderstood and alone. No one else , they believe, could possibly understand them or feel as they do.

Most early adolescents are task-oriented and competitive and want to be successful. They usually like school, especially because of the friends who are there. They generally have a high level of energy, which is sometimes interrupted by sudden periods of fatigue, and a relatively short attention span. They find it difficult to sit still in school and pay attention to a single task for a long period. They do better with short-term learning tasks which they may accomplish easily. Children of these ages tend to have difficulty understanding relationships among complex combinations of ideas and concepts. They are, however, developing the ability to think abstractly and to generalize. During this period of development, they also daydream frequently and fantasize about what their future lives and careers might be like.

Parents who are aware of these characteristics and behaviors of early

adolescents are better able to understand their children, help them to grow, and develop better relationships with them. This knowledge can also help parents recognize the differences between the expected behaviors and concerns of this period and those which may indicate a problem for which help should be sought. It is reassuring to know that, while this stage may present some difficulties, most early adolescents proceed through it without experiencing serious problems.

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Most parents want to have good relationships with their children and try to do what is best for them. There are certain methods which parents may use which are especially beneficial to good parent-child relationships as well as to the healthy development of early adolescents. These methods, described in the sections which follow, help children feel they truly matter and are worthwhile, contributing members of the family. By using these techniques, parents encourage the most desirable kind of parent-child relationship, one based upon mutual caring, trust, openness, and respect.

Giving Love Although early adolescents may outwardly resist or seem embarrassed by open demonstrations of affection by parents, they very much need to be reassured of their parents' love. Parents, therefore, should often express their feelings of affection to children. A hug, a kiss, a smile, some affectionate words, and being there when needed can go a long way in helping children feel loved and wanted.

Showing Respect Respect is essential to good parent-child relationships. This means not only respectful behavior toward parents by children, but also respectful behavior toward children by parents. The following are some ways parents can convey respect to children:

- Allow children the right to be their unique selves, rather than comparing them with others or expecting them to fit a pre-conceived image. Encourage them to develop their abilities and pursue their interests.
- Because all children need regularity and orderliness in their lives, respect them by providing an orderly pattern of living upon which they may depend.
- Avoid causing children to feel they are loved and accepted only if they meet your expectations and demands. Such rejection is damaging to their self-respect and feelings of belonging.
- Refrain from using harsh discipline, humiliation, and criticism; these destroy children's self-respect and self-confidence. These methods also cause children to be less trusting and open with their parents and result in resentment, hostility, and rebellion.
- Have high, but reasonable, expectations for children. It is important that these expectations be ones which they are capable of meeting and which are compatible with their personalities, abilities, interests, and other characteristics. These expectations should *not* be founded upon parents' desires to look good as a result of their children's accomplishments.

COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN

Parent-child relationships are greatly affected by the kinds of communication techniques used by parents. Without realizing the damaging effects on their relationships with children, parents often "talk at" them, instead of "talking with" children and listening to what they are saying. Parents frequently tend to use methods such as admonishing, threatening, shaming, ordering, and lecturing in interactions with children. These ineffective methods block open communication and discourage children because they convey a parental lack of understanding, acceptance, and respect. Many difficulties in parent-child relationships can be avoided by parents' consistent use of effective listening and responding techniques.

Empathic Listening This is a valuable technique for communicating with children. Empathy means putting yourself in the other person's place so you may better understand what that person is experiencing. In using empathic listening, parents listen not only to the words being said, but also to the underlying messages children are sending about their feelings, thoughts, and motives. As part of this technique, parents are sensitive to clues such as children's facial expressions, gestures, body posture, rates of speech, and voice tones, which help them better understand what children are saying.

The use of empathic listening enables parents to understand the full meaning of what children are trying to tell them. This kind of listening allows them to respond to children's statements in ways which encourage children to trust them and communicate openly with them.

Empathic Responding This is a technique for responding to children's statements in a way which conveys respect for and understanding of children's feelings and the reasons for those feelings. The above is an example of a parent-child interaction in which a parent uses empathic listening and responding.

This response by the parent shows respect for and understanding of the child's feelings and the apparent reason for those feelings. In this response the parent states the child's feeling (worried) and why the child feels that way. The parent also conveys respect for the child by not denying or minimizing the feelings. This kind of response paves the way for the parent and child to deal constructively with the child's concern.

The following are examples and analyses of *ineffective* parent responses to the child's statement:

Child: *"I have a big math test tomorrow, and I know I'm not going to pass it."*

Empathic Responding by Parent: *"You're worried about failing an important math test tomorrow."*

Child: *"I have a big math test tomorrow, and I know I'm not going to pass it."*

Ineffective Responding by Parent: *"Stop complaining. You always seem to find excuses for your poor math grades. Why don't you try studying for a change?"*

Analysis: *This response contains an order, an accusation, and sarcasm, which convey a lack of understanding of and respect for the child. This ineffective response generally causes the child to feel hurt or angry, thus blocking further communication and preventing them from exploring the concern together.*

Child: *"I have a big math test tomorrow, and I know I'm not going to pass it."*

Ineffective Responding by Parent: *"You don't have to be concerned about math. You always do well in it. Why worry for nothing?"*

Analysis: *In this response the parent denies the child the right to his feelings. Although the parent is trying to help, this response causes the child to feel misunderstood and alone in his concerns.*

Parents' Self-Statements Another important communication technique for parents is the use of *self-statements.* Self-statements make clear to children, in a non-threatening way, parents' feelings about children's undesirable behavior and the reason for those feelings. This technique can be helpful in gaining children's cooperation to bring about desired change. Self-statements require parents to express calmly and assertively their feelings about a specific behavior and why they feel as they do about the behavior, without blaming, accusing, or insulting children. The following is an example of a situation of a parent-child conflict and a parent's self-statement regarding the problem:

Situation: *Most of the time Bill, age 13, leaves his belongings strewn around the house. His sports equipment, school books, coat, and other belongings seem to be everywhere, causing clutter which upsets his mother. She has threatened, yelled, and blamed him for being inconsiderate, but this problem continues.*

Parent's Self-Statement: *I feel upset and discouraged because your belongings are scattered throughout the house, despite my need to have the house neat.*

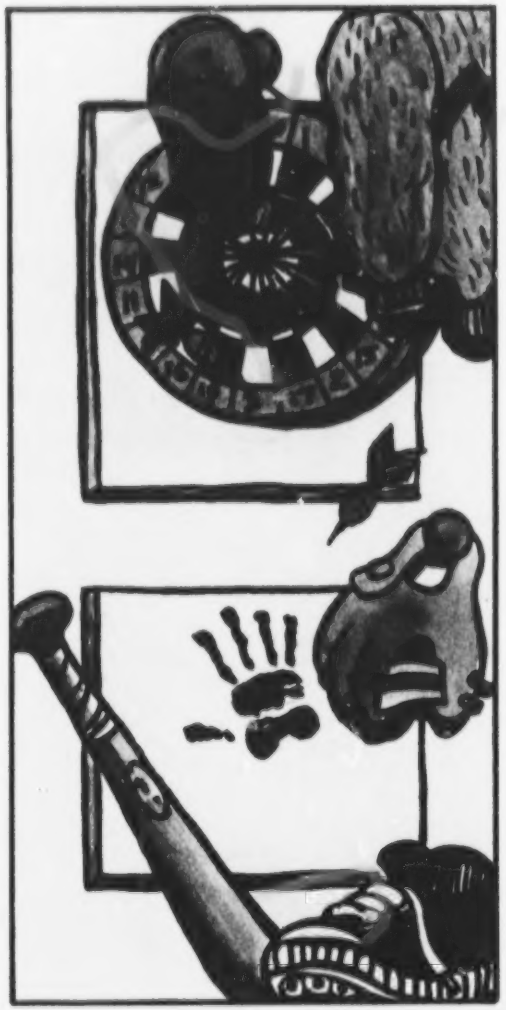
If this first self-statement does not bring about the desired results, the message should be restated to express the parent's feeling more strongly and assertively, along with the reason for the feelings. Effort must be made, however, in restating the message to remain calm and positive. If Bill had ignored his mother's first self-statement, she might have followed it with this more-assertive restatement:

"I don't like being ignored. I feel hurt and disappointed when you pay no attention to my feelings. I am angry when there is a mess in this house, and I need you to put away your things now."

USING LOGICAL AND NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Parents' use of self-statements is generally effective in obtaining the desired results with children. On occasions when they do not bring improvement, the next step is for parents to take immediate action. In the situation with Bill (described in the previous section) his mother should give him the choice of putting away his belongings immediately or not having them later when he wants them. This type of discipline technique is known as a *logical consequence*. Parents will find this technique a constructive alternative to threats and punishment in areas of ongoing conflict with children. Through consistent use of logical consequences, parents can reduce the frequency of parent-child conflicts and help children become more responsible for their own actions.

A *logical consequence* is an action established by parents which will take place each time children behave in a particular, undesirable way. In using this technique, the logical consequence is explained to children in advance so they may understand what will happen each time the undesirable behavior occurs. This explanation should be made calmly at a time free of conflict and presented in a matter-of-fact way, not as a threat. Any time thereafter that the undesirable behavior occurs, the logical consequence is carried out by the parents in an objective, calm manner, without recrimination or any discussion of the problem. Because children know in advance the consequence of a given behavior and that the consequence will be forthcoming, this consequence is not punishment.



For example, in the situation of long-term parent-child conflict in which Bill continued to leave his possessions lying around the house, a logical consequence could be employed. An appropriate logical consequence in this case might be that any time Bill leaves his belongings lying around the house, they will be taken by his mother and put away for two weeks. During this time he will not have access to them, no matter how much he may need or want them. For this technique to work, it is especially important that the consequence be closely related to the undesirable behavior and that it be used *consistently* and *calmly* whenever that behavior occurs.

The use of *natural consequences* is a valuable approach for resolving certain kinds of ongoing conflicts between parents and children. A natural consequence is an action resulting from children's behavior, without any interven-

tion from parents. In using this discipline technique parents avoid getting into no-win situations with children. Instead, they allow children to experience the consequences of their own behavior so they may learn to act more responsibly.

For example, if the problem with Bill had been caused by the fact that he never cleans his room, a natural consequence could be used. The natural consequence for this situation is that Bill would experience living in his messy, uncleaned room. His mother would not clean his room. Furthermore, she would no longer discuss the problem with him nor concern herself with it in any way. The door to Bill's room would be kept closed, so the other family members would not have to view the mess inside. It is quite likely that Bill would eventually find the situation unbearable and, thereafter, clean it with some regularity. Whether he does so or not, however, Bill lives with the natural consequence of his behavior and learns that he is the person responsible for this situation.

Parents will find that consistent use of logical and natural consequences are excellent techniques for changing children's unacceptable behavior, without resorting to threats and punishment. Using these approaches provides meaningful learning experiences for children regarding their responsibility for their own actions and are easier for parents

to carry out than most other methods of discipline.

ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE

An important developmental task which children must accomplish during this stage is to become more independent of parents and assume greater personal responsibility. Their need for increased independence, especially in matters such as choosing friends, social activities, clothing, and hairstyles, becomes highly important to them. Parents will find, however, that children in this transition state of development vaccilate between demanding greater independence one day and depending upon parental guidance the next day.

In an effort to assert their independence, early adolescents sometimes resist parental authority, are critical of their parents, or question their parents' values. Some parents become upset or angry when these behaviors occur, not realizing such behaviors are typical of this age group. Unfortunately, many parents often find themselves in conflict with their children in attempting to define the extent of independence and responsibility children may assume.

Learning to become more independent and responsible during this stage is essential preparation for adulthood. It is important, therefore, for parents to encourage early adolescents to be independent and responsible for matters which their children are mature enough to undertake without experiencing serious difficulties or harm. At the same time parents must maintain responsibility for areas of living which children are not developmentally ready to handle.

Being too permissive with children is as damaging as being too restrictive. Consequently, the key to helping children learn to handle added independence and responsibility is to establish a balance between allowing too much or too little independence and responsibility. Parents should provide suitable opportunities for independence and responsibility and set reasonable limits appropriate to their children's maturity.

Parents then must consistently ensure that children are independent and responsible within the limits which have been established. As children mature, the opportunities and limits should be changed accordingly so children may become increasingly prepared for the independence and responsibilities of adulthood.

Some parents, hoping to protect their children from mistakes or failures, are reluctant to give them the independence and responsibility they need. This overprotection generally results in children seeing themselves as helpless, dependent, and always in need of parental assistance in order to function. It may also eventually result in their becoming hostile and rebellious toward parents. Overprotection deprives children of experiences which will help them acquire in gradual stages the knowledge and abilities necessary for becoming independent, responsible adults.

HELPING TO DEVELOP RESPONSIBILITY

Although parents must continue to fulfill their responsibilities regarding children's education, early adolescents have to learn to take increased responsibility for their academic progress, school attendance, conduct, studying, and homework. Parents can help children develop a sense of responsibility toward school and learning and a sense of pride in their accomplishments by doing the following:

- Providing an orderly home environment and a consistent family schedule which allows adequate time for studying and homework, household chores, recreation, and rest.
- Modeling responsible behavior and good work habits.
- Having realistic expectations of children and letting them know what these expectations are.
- Involving children in planning, solving problems, and making decisions regarding themselves, education, and general family matters.
- Supporting and encouraging children in their efforts to cope with difficulties which arise, rather than solving all problems for them.
- Using constructive encouragement rather than destructive criticism.
- Being certain to give positive feedback when children fulfill their responsibilities or do a job well.

It is also very important for early adolescents to have responsibilities at home which contribute to family life. Parents should expect and insist that assigned responsibilities, such as assisting in the preparation of meals, shopping, babysitting, cleaning one's room, yard work, or other necessary chores, be done well, regularly, and on time.

HELPING CHILDREN TO SUCCEED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Parents generally try to do all they can to help children become healthy, productive, and happy adults. During the elementary school years, most parents are very involved in their children's schooling. They know and meet with their children's teachers and principals, are aware of their children's progress and behavior in school, help solve problems which may arise in school regarding their children, and see to it that adequate time is spent on studying and homework.

Unfortunately, when children enter middle school, some parents stop being actively involved in their children's education, as if their help and support are no longer needed. Although middle school children are becoming more independent of parents and are increasingly involved in activities outside the family, parents remain the most influential persons in their lives. Because of this influence, parents must continue to be actively involved in their children's education in middle school. Through their involvement parents can do much to help children believe in the value and importance of education, be enthusiastic about learning, and achieve success in school.

Some suggestions have already been made in this chapter for helping children become more responsible and independent. The following section will provide additional suggestions and ideas about ways parents may assist children to succeed academically during the middle school years.

- Encourage your children to aim high and always do their best work.
- Show interest in your children's studies by talking with them often about what they are learning and doing in school.
- Discuss with your children their ideas and feelings about school, their studies, and student activities.
- Insist that your children spend adequate time on studying and homework. Children should spend approximately one and one-half to two hours each school day on studying and homework in order to be successful in their studies. Occasionally, they may also need to do additional work on weekends. Check your children's homework with them when it is completed and discuss what they have learned. If they have difficulties with studying or homework, encourage them to contact their teachers for help as soon as possible. Sometimes it may also be helpful for parents to discuss these difficulties with their children's teachers.
- Read and review with your children the information and suggestions about studying and homework in Chapter 1 of this booklet. Be sure that they follow the suggestions made there to help them accomplish these important tasks.
- Look over your children's school books, papers, special projects, and other materials so you may be aware of what they are learning and doing.
- Take time to be in contact periodically with your children's counselors, principals, and teachers to find out what your children should be learning in

school, how they are progressing, and how you may help. Be a full partner in your children's education.

- Be sure that your children attend school regularly. In the event of absence because of illness or other valid reasons, it is important that children keep up with their study and homework assignments.
- Help your children select a middle school program of studies which may best prepare them for high school.
- Encourage your children to pursue their interests and make friends through participation in some extracurricular activities. Be certain, however, that they select no more than a few so they have adequate time for studying and homework.
- Make clear to your children their responsibility to follow school rules about student behavior and to respect school property.
- Encourage your children to get to know their counselors and to maintain contact with them throughout their middle school years.
- Attend parent meetings, parent education groups, and other activities for parents at your children's school.
- Be aware of your children's activities, especially those outside of school. Make sure that these activities are supervised by responsible adults. Staying in touch with parents of your children's friends is one way to accomplish this and also helps you respond better to children's statements, "Everyone else is doing it."
- Serve as a parent volunteer at your children's school. Your children and the school will benefit from your involvement and help.

COPING WITH MISTAKES AND FAILURES

Although success in most endeavors most of the time is necessary for developing feelings of self-worth and competency, occasional mistakes or failures by children can also be useful to them. When parents and teachers respond to children's mistakes with understanding and provide help and encouragement for renewed efforts, children can acquire some valuable knowledge about themselves and life. They can learn that all people sometimes make mistakes and that it is all right not to be perfect, although trying hard to do one's best is very important. Finally, parents can help children learn to bounce back from failure and disappointment and try again, using new and better approaches to the particular problem.

HOLDING FAMILY MEETINGS

Another particularly effective approach for helping children become self-disciplined and responsible is the *family meeting*. The use of this technique also helps family life to be more enjoyable by reducing conflict among children as well as between parents and children. At family meetings concerns or problems about family living are discussed, and family rules are established. These meetings provide the opportunity for parents and children to discuss such matters openly and calmly in an atmosphere of mutual respect and order.

Family meetings should be held on the same day and at the same time each week. This time should be convenient to all members, and, in general, each meeting should last no more than one hour. All family members, except very young children, are expected to attend each meeting.

Before the first meeting, parents should explain to children that the purpose of family meetings is to find ways for the family to live together more cooperatively. Parents should also tell them how the meeting will be conducted and provide some examples of possible topics for discussion at meetings. Children should understand that they will have the right to introduce topics related to family living which are of concern to them, and that decisions will be made by majority vote.

All meetings should be conducted in a democratic manner so that parents and children may express their concerns and opinions, suggest rules for family living, and be listened to with respect. While it is advisable for a parent to serve as leader for the first few meetings, children should also take turns in conducting future meetings. The following are some guidelines for holding a successful first family meeting:

- Start the first meeting by briefly explaining again its purpose and the probable benefits to all family members, especially in terms of fewer disagreements and conflicts. Emphasize the importance of each member's contribution to family life.
- Convey understanding of children's need for and right to greater independence and responsibility as they become more mature.
- Explain briefly that all family members, including the children, have responsibilities for the well-being of the family. Give some examples of responsibilities that pertain to your family setting.
- Make it clear that any family member may bring up concerns and make suggestions about rules and responsibilities for family living.
- Explain that the task of making good decisions at family meetings can best be accomplished if certain procedures are followed, such as (1) avoiding the use of insults, accusations, and ridicule; (2) staying on the subject being discussed; (3) listening when someone is speaking; (4) dealing with the "here-and-now," rather than with past problems or injustices; and (5) showing respect for each other.
- Use your best communication skills in guiding the discussion. Look directly at your children when speaking to them, and express your ideas and feelings specifically and calmly. Do *not* use tactics such as threats, sermons, humiliation, or insults.
- Listen carefully to your children's points of view. Let them know that you understand and respect their feelings and opinions, even when they differ from yours.
- Explain that the decisions made at each meeting will be written down and tried out for one week. At the following meeting, discussion will be held to determine how things are going, and any necessary changes will be made. Meetings will be held weekly to discuss areas of concern and make family decisions and plans.

- Point out that parents and children are expected to follow the rules and fulfill responsibilities decided at meetings.
- Make it clear that decisions made at family meetings will be determined by majority vote.
- Try to reach concensus or compromise regarding areas of strong disagreement prior to voting so children and parents may feel satisfied with the outcome. This is often possible regarding matters of lesser importance to parents but which are of great importance to children, such as modes of dress or hairstyles. There may be some matters, however, about which compromise on your part is not advisable, such as time spent on homework or the time at which children must come home at night. In matters such as these, firmly and without anger, restate more strongly your reasons for the necessity of the particular rule or responsibility and your expectations that it will be respected. Remember that you are the parent and have the benefit of knowledge and judgement your children have not yet acquired.

At all family meetings it is important to follow the procedures suggested in the guidelines for holding family meetings. It is also important to keep a record in writing of all decisions made. Before ending each meeting, decisions which have been made should be reviewed together and a written list of decisions posted where it may be easily seen by family members.

Family meetings are *not* for purposes of making decisions about family matters appropriate only for adult consideration, such as family finances and personal matters between spouses. They are intended for making decisions regarding matters in which it is appropriate for children to be involved. In addition to the topics mentioned previously, deciding at family meetings about matters such as plans for family trips, relationships among children, the advisability of purchasing a pet, the family schedule, and ways to handle emergency situations give children excellent opportunities to become responsible, contributing members of the family.

RECOGNIZING CHILDREN'S EFFORTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It is important for parents to acknowledge consistently children's efforts and accomplishments at school and home,

even if the results of some efforts may need improvement. When children try to fulfill their responsibilities and do their best in attempting to complete tasks, parental recognition motivates them to persist in their efforts to achieve. Parental recognition helps children develop a sense of competency and self-worth, a willingness to try new tasks, and feelings of satisfaction in doing a job well. When parents use this technique consistently over time, children eventually begin to "reward themselves" for their own efforts by feeling good about themselves and what they have done. This ability to reward ourselves for our own efforts serves as a powerful motivation throughout life to fulfill our responsibilities, do our best, and overcome obstacles.

Parents' acknowledgement of children's efforts and accomplishments should be realistic, specific, and genuine.

The most effective way to recognize what children have done well is to focus primarily upon their behavior and how they are likely to be feeling about it. For example, the following is an appropriate parental acknowledgement of a child's attempts to improve her grades in social studies:

"I have noticed how much extra time and energy you have been spending on social studies. I'm sure you feel proud of yourself for working so hard to do better."

If the child's grades in social studies improve, an effective parent comment might be as follows:

"You must be delighted about all you have accomplished in social studies. Your hard work has really paid off. I'm happy about it for you."

Sometimes, despite much hard work and effort, children are unable to complete a task as well as might be desired. Parents' recognition of their efforts to achieve can help children feel a sense of accomplishment and give them courage to continue trying. Parents' comments in such cases should, of course, be sincere, specific, and encouraging, focusing upon the positive aspects of what the child has done and providing support for future efforts.

For example, John has been having difficulty with math. He has been receiving additional help from his teacher and has been struggling to master some new and difficult math concepts. This evening he has worked hard for over an hour studying math and completing the homework assignment. An effective comment from his parents is as follows:

"You have worked so hard on your math tonight! Even though you found the assignment difficult, you kept at it until it was finished, rather than taking the easy way out."

These kinds of parental recognition of children's efforts and accomplishments come naturally after parents have tried them a few times. You will find that recognizing your children's efforts can bring long-lasting benefits.

GETTING HELP WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

Early adolescents sometimes experience difficult problems or concerns for which they and their parents need additional help. These problems may be related to school, home, or children's personal and physical development. Whatever the nature of the problems, parents should encourage children to talk with them about their problems and feelings and should provide encouragement, support, and guidance to help children deal with problems constructively.

In some instances, when children are troubled, they do not reveal to parents how upset and in need of help they are. Because of this, parents must be alert and sensitive to unusual types of behavior in children which signal the need for special help. Symptoms such as the following should not be ignored: repeated incidences of extreme moodiness and withdrawal, sudden changes in living habits and patterns, sleep or eating disorders, aggression, inappropriate loss of weight, or frequent mood changes. Help should be sought as soon as possible for children showing symptoms such as these.

Help for school-related concerns is available to students and parents from school counselors, teachers, and principals. Contacting the school counselor is a good way to begin the process of getting suitable help for concerns about school. For other kinds of problems, the counselor and your family physician can furnish information regarding appropriate sources of professional help available in your community.

MUST PARENTS BE PERFECT?

In reading the information in this chapter about raising early adolescents, some parents may become alarmed at the enormous responsibility they have for the well-being of their children. They may wonder if it is possible to be a "perfect parent" and follow all the suggestions which have been made here.

It seems important, therefore, to point out that none of us is perfect and that all parents make mistakes sometimes in raising their children. Children are resilient and will not suffer undue damage from parents' occasional errors.

Children do, however, require consistently their parents' love, respect, understanding, encouragement, and support. They also consistently need a predictable and secure family environment, one in which they feel a sense of belonging and importance. And, equally important, they need consistently to develop their competencies, to become increasingly responsible, independent, and self-sufficient, and to succeed in most of their endeavors in school and at home.

Parents can best help their children in all aspects of development by trying to ensure that these needs are consistently met. Parents' understanding, common sense, adult judgement, and a good sense of humor can make these middle school years a joy to parents and children.

A FINAL MESSAGE TO STUDENTS

This booklet has provided you with much valuable information about middle school and what it is like to be a middle school student. You have read about middle school subjects and courses, special programs and activities, studying and homework, student responsibilities, and what you should accomplish during your middle school years. You have also been given some ideas for learning more about yourself and careers while you are in middle school.

Using the information in this booklet can be most important to you. It can help you choose those middle school courses which can best prepare you for high school and the education and career you may want after graduation. It can also serve as a guide to help you get the most from your middle school studies and activities.

Although your parents, teachers, counselors, and principals will want to help you as much as possible, the responsibility for what you accomplish in middle school is *yours*. Take advantage of the many learning opportunities which lie ahead for you. Do the *best* for yourself by making your middle school years as successful as possible.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN VIRGINIA PUBLICATIONS

- **ABOUT THE PRESCHOOL YEARS, BOOK 1** For parents of young children who will serve as their children's first teachers and educational decision makers.

  Includes information about child development; childrearing techniques; helping young children grow and learn; preschool education; and public education in Virginia.

- **ABOUT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS, BOOK 2** For parents of children entering elementary school.

  Includes information about elementary school programs; school staff and services; studying and homework; child development; childrearing techniques; and helping children to be successful students.*

- **ABOUT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS, BOOK 3** For students completing their final year in elementary school and for parents wanting to help them plan for middle school.

  Includes information about middle school programs; school staff and services; studying and homework; career exploration; early adolescent development; childrearing techniques; and helping middle school children to be successful students.

- **ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL, BOOK 4** For seventh-grade students and their parents for use in planning for high school.

  Includes information about high school programs; graduation requirements; diplomas; studying and homework; special programs and activities; careers; and helping high school students to succeed.

- **AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, BOOK 5** For high school juniors and their parents for use in planning for further education and careers after high school graduation.

  Includes information about Virginia's colleges and universities; community and two-year colleges; vocational-occupational programs; adult and continuing education; General Educational Development (GED) Program; military service; financial aid; careers; and sources of additional information.

Copies of these booklets will be available for use at the following locations throughout Virginia: Guidance offices and libraries at all public elementary, middle/junior high/intermediate, and high schools, and public libraries.

For information, please contact: Public Information Office
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 6Q
Richmond, VA 23216

A PUBLICATION OF
VIRGINIA'S SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
IN COOPERATION WITH
THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION